

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 034168 TOSEC 020020
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:ARDAY:BDF

APPROVED BY NEA:SSOBER

S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

D - MR. CHRISTOPHER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY FLASH

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 034168 TOSEC 020020

EXDIS FOR ATHERTON FROM SOBER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, EG, PFOR, US, IS

SUBJECT: AMOCO RIG IN GULF OF SUEZ

REF: CAIRO 2773 AND PREVIOUS

1. YOU HAVE IN REFTELS BASICALLY THE SAME INFORMATION WE HAVE. PICTURE WE ARE GETTING FROM LOCAL AMOCO PEOPLE IS GENERALLY THE SAME. YOU ARE THEREFORE IN AS GOOD A POSITION AS WE TO JUDGE HOW YOU WANT TO PLAY IT AT YOUR END.

2. OUR SUGGESTION, FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, WOULD BE TO HAVE THE EMBASSY APPROACH THE ISRAELIS (DUNNIGAN TO EVRON, E.G.) PRIMARILY IN THE FIRST INSTANCE TO GET THEM TO REMOVE THE DEADLINE PUT BY THEIR PATROL BOAT COMMANDER ON

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RAISING THE RIGS ANCHORS. THE DEADLINE CREATES AN ATMOSPHERE OF CRISIS JUST AT THE TIME OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT, AND THIS ISSUE--WHICH APPEARS TO INVOLVE ONLY THE PLACEMENT OF ANCHORS AND NOT THE POSITION OF THE RIG ITSELF--SHOULD NOT BE INJECTED INTO THE SECRETARY'S TALKS IF IT CAN BE AVOIDED. WE CAN POINT OUT THAT THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE ANCHORS IS NOT CLEAR, SINCE THE RIG

APPEARS TO BE TO THE WEST OF THE "MEDIAN LINE", AND WE SHOULD ALL HAVE TIME TO CHECK MAPS, CHECK FEASIBILITY OF DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF ANCHORS, ETC.

3. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE ONE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EMBASSY CAIRO'S REPORT AND THAT OF THE LOCAL AMOCO OFFICE CONCERNS THE RIG'S PRECISE LOCATION. THE AMOCO CHICAGO OFFICE BELIEVES THE RIG IS IN BLOCK 392 (LATITUDE 27 DEGREES 52 MINUTES 56.13 SECONDS NORTH AND LONGITUDE 33 DEGREES 41 MINUTES 38.65 SECONDS EAST.) WE CALCULATE THIS TO BE ABOUT 1.7 KILOMETERS WEST OF THE MEDIAN LINE, USING THE COORDINATES GIVEN US BY THE ISRAELIS FOR THE POSITION OF THEIR LINE IN THIS AREA.

4. IF THE ISRAELIS AGREE TO LIFT THE DEADLINE, THIS PARTICULAR FACET OF THE GULF OIL ISSUE COULD BE SET ASIDE IN THE SECRETARY'S TALKS WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WAS BEING LOOKED AT BY STAFFS ON BOTH SIDES WITH A VIEW TO ASCERTAINING FACTS AND FINDING A SOLUTION. (PRESUMABLY, IN ADDITION, WE WOULD WANT TO URGE THE ISRAELIS IN GENERAL TO BE LESS RIGID AND MILITANT IN THE HANDLING OF THESE AMOCO DRILLING INCIDENTS--IN PART TO MAKE A RECORD TO REFER TO IN CAIRO.)

5. WE HAVE TOLD AMOCO HERE THAT, AS IN THE PAST, THE DECISION WHETHER TO MOVE THE RIG IS THEIRS TO MAKE. WE REITERATED OUR HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT VIOLENCE COULD BE AVOIDED. THE AMOCO OFFICE (BOSWELL) AGREED.

6. INCIDENTALLY, WE HAVE JUST HAD A CALL FROM MARVIN
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KALB, WHO HAS THE STORY ABOUT THIS LATEST INCIDENT. PARTICULARLY SINCE THE FACTS ARE RELATIVELY EASY TO OBTAIN FROM AMOCO (FROM WHOM KALB MAY HAVE GOTTEN THEM), WE SEE NO PERCENTAGE IN BEING EVASIVE AND WE ARE CONCENTRATING WITH KALB IN PUTTING IT IN PERSPECTIVE AND DOWNPLAYING ITS SIGNIFICANCE. WE ARE TELLING HIM THAT THERE ARE FROM TIME TO TIME SITUATIONS INVOLVING AMOCO OPERATIONS AND THE ISRAELI "MEDIAN LINE", THAT SUCH A SITUATION HAS AGAIN TAKEN PLACE, THAT IT IS BEING DEALT WITH AS USUAL THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS, THAT THIS IS NOT A "CRISIS" AND THAT WHILE THE SECRETARY WOULD BE DISCUSSING THE GULF OF SUEZ ISSUE GENERALLY, WE WOULD NOT ANTICIPATE THIS INCIDENT WOULD FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN SUCH DISCUSSIONS.

HARTMAN

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NNN

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